

Children's House Assistant Course

The intention of this course is to help interested adults become able assistants in a Montessori Casa dei Bambini

The task of the Assistant is NOT to present materials, but rather to support and help the guide (teacher) to maintain the equilibrium within the class.

Focus of the Assistant's work:

- To observe
- To learn when and how to intervene (not interfere)
- To acquire the ability to allow the children to become more and more independent; "any unnecessary help is a hindrance to development"
- To gain knowledge of Montessori's understanding of Freedom and Discipline
- To learn how to gain the children's trust

Duration of the course program:

- Sixty hours at the MTCM and six additional hours of observation in the Fall
- The course will be in a summer format of two full weeks.

Obligatory Reading:

It is recommended that selected reading from the four books listed below be undertaken during the course to prepare the assistants for further reading after the course. A binder of readings will be provided to each participant.

The Secret of Childhood

The Child in the Family

Education for a New World

The Absorbent Mind

The Course Program:

- I. Introduction to Montessori
- II. The Role of the Guide (teacher)
- III. The Role of the Assistant
- IV. Overview of the Planes of Development
- V. The Child's Mind from 0-6 years also touching upon Sensitive Periods
- VI. Order:
The importance of Order and Precision, with emphasis on the part Order plays in the development of the personality
- VII. Movement 0-6:
Development of Movement and its significance for the child
- VIII. Language:
Development of, also taking into account the following elements:
 - Preparation of the Adult
 - Use of language in general
 - Vocabulary – correct, precise, rich, scientifically exact
 - How to listen to children
 - How to elicit language

- IX. Independence:
Development of, also taking into account different levels of independence-physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual, as conditions for interdependence
- X. Prepared Environment:
Home and Casa dei Bambini (the physical and the intangible)
- XI. Freedom and Discipline:
Understanding the concept of Freedom from the Montessori point of view and the growth of Discipline as an inner development.
- XII. Social Development
- XIII. Observation and its relevance (technique and recording of)
- XIV. Music and Art
- XV. Maintaining the environment (indoor and outdoor)

Part of each session should be dedicated to the reading and discussion of Maria Montessori's texts relevant to topics given.

Three hours shall be dedicated to:

- Having the Assistants practice basic movements such as: walking within the environment, carrying trays, chairs, materials, etc.
- Opening and closing doors, drawers, etc., so that their demeanor will be consistent with the expectations within the Prepared Environment
- Essential grace and courtesy (i.e. greeting children and parents), giving appropriate assistance in the coatroom, etc.

Ten hours shall be dedicated to:

- Introducing the techniques for making, mending and maintaining materials.

Further requirements:

- Submission of three papers (500 words each) on topics set by the course, to be submitted by a date stipulated by the course director.

In order to obtain the Children's House Assistants Course Certificate a minimum of 90% attendance is required.